

**United States Embassy Nouakchott, Mauritania**  
**Message for U.S. Citizens: Rift Valley Fever in Nouakchott**  
**October 30, 2013**

The U.S. Embassy has learned of reports of an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever in southern Mauritania due to the excessive rainfall and recent flooding. The National Institute of Research for Public Health in Mauritania has confirmed the report, though the only cases observed so far involve livestock/animals. For more information about Rift Valley Fever and how to prevent it, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>. While there have been no recorded cases in humans, the U.S. Embassy would like to provide the following information about Rift Valley Fever.

What is Rift Valley Fever?

Rift Valley fever (RVF) is an acute, fever-causing viral disease that affects domestic animals (such as cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats, and camels) and humans. RVF is most commonly associated with mosquito-borne epidemics during years of unusually heavy rainfall. RVF is generally found in regions of eastern and southern Africa where sheep and cattle are raised, but the virus also exists in most countries of sub-Saharan Africa and in Madagascar.

How is RVF Spread among Animals?

A high occurrence of RVF in non-humans is generally observed during periods of unusually heavy rainfall and localized flooding. The excessive rainfall allows mosquito eggs to hatch. The mosquito eggs are naturally infected with the RVF virus, and the mosquitoes transfer the virus to the livestock on which they feed. Once the livestock is infected, other species of mosquitoes can become infected from the animals and can subsequently spread the disease. In addition, it is possible that the virus can be transmitted by other biting insects.

Transmission to Humans:

Humans usually get RVF through bites from infected mosquitoes and possibly other biting insects that have virus-contaminated mouthparts. Humans can also get the disease if they are exposed to the blood, body fluids, or tissues of infected animals.

Symptoms and Complications:

RVF virus can cause several different disease syndromes. People with RVF typically have either no symptoms or a mild illness associated with fever and liver abnormalities. However, in some patients the illness can progress to hemorrhagic fever (which can lead to shock or hemorrhage), encephalitis (inflammation of the brain, which can lead to headaches, coma, or seizures), or ocular disease (diseases affecting the eye). Patients who become ill usually experience fever, generalized weakness, back pain, dizziness, and extreme weight loss at the onset of the illness. Typically, patients recover within two days to one week after onset of illness.

Risk Reduction/ Preventative Measures

During an outbreak of RVF, close contact with animals, particularly with their body fluids, either directly or via aerosols, has been identified as the most significant risk factor for RVF virus

infection. In the absence of specific treatment and an effective human vaccine, individuals can take preventive measures to protect themselves and families.

- o Reducing the risk of animal-to-human transmission arising from the unsafe consumption of fresh blood, raw milk or animal tissue. In the epizootic regions, all animal products (blood, meat and milk) should be thoroughly cooked before eating.
- o Personal and community protection against mosquito bites through the use of impregnated mosquito nets, personal insect repellents, by wearing appropriate clothing (long-sleeved shirts and trousers) and by avoiding outdoor activity at peak biting times (dawn and dusk) of the vector species.

If you would like to obtain Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) travel notices, call the CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) from within the United States, or 1-404-639-3534 from overseas, or visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>.

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Mauritania enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/step>. STEP enrollment gives you the latest security updates, and makes it easier for the U.S. embassy or nearest U.S. consulate to contact you in an emergency. If you don't have Internet access, enroll directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Regularly monitor the State Department's website at <http://travel.state.gov>, where you can find current Travel Warnings, (including the Travel Warning for Mauritania), Travel Alerts, and the Worldwide Caution. Read the Country Specific Information for Mauritania at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_4965.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html). For additional information, refer to "A Safe Trip Abroad" on the State Department's website.

Contact the U.S. embassy or consulate for up-to-date information on travel restrictions. You can also call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free from within the United States and Canada, or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). Follow us on Twitter at <https://mobile.twitter.com/travelgov> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/travelgov>, and download our free Smart Traveler iPhone App at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/smart-traveler/id442693988?mt=8> to have travel information at your fingertips.

The U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott is located between the Presidency building and the Spanish Embassy on Rue Abdallaye and is open Sunday-Thursday from 8:00-5:00. The phone number is 45 25 26 60. If you are a U.S. citizen in need of urgent assistance, the emergency number for the U.S. Embassy is 36 62 81 63. In the event of an emergency that interrupts mobile phone

(SMS) or Internet communication in Mauritania, U.S. citizens may call the Embassy's dedicated Consular emergency recording at 45 25 37 07 to receive the most up-to-date instructions.